



July 14, 2023

Dear UMB Community,

In the days since the Brooklyn Homes mass shooting that left 18-year-old Aaliyah Gonzalez and 20-year-old Kylis Fagbemi dead and 28 others injured, there has been much discussion about the events that transpired. The one thing we know for certain is that the community, and our city, is hurting. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed, injured, or traumatized by the shooting in Brooklyn Homes over the Fourth of July weekend. We know that violence — in any form — causes injury not only to those directly involved, but also to communities. As an anchor institution in Baltimore, we have a role to play, using our expertise and impact to improve the well-being of Baltimore's residents. Our core values, especially equity, justice, and well-being, have guided our actions in responding.

What does it look like to be an active anchor institution? In the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting, medical professionals at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center cared for injured patients. UMB quickly acted by deploying longstanding existing resources to the Brooklyn community including mental health specialists and caseworkers, support services, and resources to help neighbors. In coordination with local grassroots organizations and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, UMB had a presence at the Brooklyn Homes community center with social workers, lawyers, and mental health experts. From sharing information about the state Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to setting up a swimsuit drive so that young people might enjoy some summer fun, UMB's teams listened to the community and worked with Brooklyn community organizations and leaders to mobilize support. In response to neighbors' concerns about kids being afraid to play outside, UMB organized a toy drive that is ongoing. Toys can be dropped off at the Resource Center located at 9 N. Eutaw St. or purchased through an [Amazon registry webpage](#). UMB also shared expertise on trauma-informed care and the UMB Police Department brought its [comfort K9](#) for snuggles as well. The community support was coordinated through the UMB EMBRACE (EMbracing Baltimore through Research, Academics, and Community Engagement) Initiative.

This work is very much aligned with our core values and our mission to improve the human condition and serve the public good. That mission leads medical professionals such as UMB physicians at Shock Trauma to provide excellent patient care and public health interventions like the University of Maryland Medical System's [Violence Prevention Programs](#); employees at the UMB [Center for Violence Prevention](#) to research mechanisms and ways to reduce violence at the root; members of our [School of Social Work](#) to provide on-the-ground support; our [Office of Community Engagement](#) to help coordinate volunteers and supplies; and our [Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise Center](#), in partnership with city resources, to support victims of crime. We do this work because this is our city, and we care about our neighbors. This is one example of how we embrace our community as an anchor institution.

Violence is traumatizing and impacts the physiological, mental, and social health of the community. It is not lost on me that gun violence is an all-too-common occurrence. That's why it's so important that we continue our work as an anchor institution committed to Baltimore.

It will take all of us to make sure that our neighbors in Brooklyn and beyond have the support they need in healing and a greater effort to stop violence from occurring. UMB will do our part.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS
President

This note was authorized for distribution to the University of Maryland, Baltimore community by the Office of the President.

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